STIMLVVS ORTHODOXVS;

Sive

GOADUS *REDIVIVUS.*

A

DISPUTATION

Partly *Theological*, partly *Metaphyſical*, concerning the *Neceſſity* and *Contingency* of *Events* in the World, in reſpect of God's *Eternal Decree.*

Written above twenty years ſince by that Reverend and Learned Divine, *THOMAS GOAD*, Doctor of Divinity, and Rector of *Hadleigh* in *Suffolk.*

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To the *READER.*

Chriſtian Reader,

THIS Piece which I here propoſe to thy view, was the onely Remain (that I know of) of that Reverend Divine, whoſe name is prefixed to it. A Work certainly worth two or three hours time to peruſe. It came to my hands by buying ſome of the Books of his deceaſed Amanuenſis. I need to make no Encomium either of the Author, or the Work; the one was very well known to, and is ſtill remembred by ſome; and the worth of the other needs not beg our Commendation. This our Reverend Author was one of the moſt eminent Divines at the Synod of Dort, when the ſubject matter of this enſuing Diſputation, and matters of the like nature, amongſt other controverted Points, were in conteſt. Whether our Author was then of that judgment, which he declares in this Diſputation, I am not certain. However, if his after thoughts (which commonly are the * beſt) inclined him to the truth, and ſwayed his belief, we have reaſon to bleſs the God of Truth for the diſcovery. And I heartily wiſh, that all men, who are intangled in the briars of theſe prickly Diſputations, (as our Reverend Author calls them) would lay aſide all prejudice, and ſuffer their judgments to be raviſhed to the embracing of Truth by the argumentative allurements of Scripture and Reaſon. Thou wilt find the ſingular uſe of this enſuing Piece in affording thee light to, and carrying thee through thoſe obſcure intricacies controverted betwixt the Remonſtrants and Contra-Remonſtrants. And that it may be of this ſingular uſe and benefit, is the hearty prayer of

* Δευτεραι Φροντιδες σοφωτεραι.

Thy Friend and Servant in Chriſt,
F. G.

A DISPUTATION,

Partly Theological, *partly* Metaphyſical, *concerning the* Neceſſity *and* Contingency *of* Events *in the World, in reſpect of God's* Eternal Decrees.

The Sum of the controverſie is this.

1. WHETHER or no all things that ever have or ſhall come to paſs in the world, have been, or ſhall be effected *neceſſarily*, in reſpect of an *irreſiſtable Decree*, by which God hath everlaſtingly *determined*, that they ſhould *inevitably* come to paſs?

2. Whether or no many things have not been done *contingently*, or after ſuch a middle manner between *impoſſibility* of being, and *neceſſity* of being, that ſome things which have been might as well not have been, and many things which have not been might as well have been, for ought God hath decreed to the contrary?

An happy compoſing of this intricate Controverſie will be of excellent uſe, not onely in guiding us ſafe through the briers of theſe prickly Diſputations of *Predeſtination*, *Free-will*, the *Cauſe of ſin*, &c. (which at this day have ſet *Proteſtants*, *Papiſts*, *Lutherans*, *Arminians*, *Puritans*, together by the ears) but over and above in eaſing us of many ſcruples and perplexing caſes, which daily ariſe in our minds, concerning God's *ſpecial* Decrees, and *particular* Providence, in reſpect of the paſſages of our life.

But the ſingular uſes of this Diſputation will beſt appear when it

it is finished; and therefore without any further Preface, I betake my self unto it, purposing to carry such an equal eye to brevity and perspicuity, that the Reader shall have no just cause to say, that I am either obscure or tedious.

I have already divided the main Question into two particular *Queries*. Many Divines compleatly Reverend, both for their knowledge and practice of Religion, (and therefore deservedly of precious esteem in the *Reformed* Churches) have subscribed affirmatively to the first *Quæry*; maintaining, that whatsoever any creature doth, *Man* or *Beast*, *Plants* or *Inanimate* Elements and *Meteors*; God from all eternity hath *decreed*, that they should *necessarily* do it; so that a man doth not so much as spit without a Decree: yea, they say, that there falleth not so much as a *drop* of rain, or ariseth a *blast* of wind, *sine speciali Dei jussu*.

1. *Opin.*

Contrariwise, some others of as good (though perhaps not of so great) a name as they, both for their *Learning* and love of *Orthodox* Religion, have subscribed *affirmatively* to the *second*; teaching, that as God in his *wisdom* hath ordered, that some things are *impossible* and cannot be; some things *necessary*, and cannot but be; so also hath he *poised* some things in such an equal *possibility* of being or not being, and left it to his creatures *choice* to turn the *scale*, that in respect of him they fall out *contingently*; it being as possible for his creatures to have *omitted* them, as to have *done* them.

2. *Opin.*

I have a good while *halted* between these two opinions, I have *Sceptically* hovered over them, to see where I were best to light. Sometimes I have sent out my assent like *Noah*'s Dove, but she misliking her footing, speedily withdrew her self back again, till at length she finding better entertainment amongst this *second* company, she hath returned now at last with an *Olive* branch in her mouth, with that *emblem* of peace, Uniting my distractions.

The Arguments by which *Truth* first courted, and at last *ravished* my assent, are those which both *confirm* the second, and *confute* the first opinion.

Arg. 1.

The first manifestly discovers an *Heathenish* Error, lurking *implicitely* in the *opposite* opinion: Our Adversaries indeed do disallow it *explicitly*, and I know they heartily mislike it; but it will

will too *evidently* appear, that if that error be *Paganiſm*, their opinion is little better, which I prove thus; It was the conceit of the antient *Stoicks*, that all things were governed and brought to paſſe by an inevitable *Deſtiny*, all things falling out by a *fatall* neceſſity, in ſpight of men and (according to the addition of *Poets*) of gods alſo. Now do not our *Oppoſites* in this *Controverſie* impoſe a *fatal* Neceſſity on all things? yea, they go further in this point than ſome *Stoicks*; for (as it may be collected out of ſome of their writings) though *they* ſubjected the main *Events* and ends to irreſiſtable *Deſtiny*, yet they ſuppoſed the *means* (by which a man might, though vainly, endeavour to *croſſe* thoſe ends) *arbitrary* in man's *choice*. But our *Oppoſites* impoſe a *neceſſity* on all things whatſoever, not onely upon *Ends* and *events*, but alſo upon the *means*. For example, according to their Doctrine, God hath not onely *decreed* that I ſhall, or that I ſhall not eſcape this *infection*, but he hath alſo *decreed* that I ſhall, or I ſhall not *uſe* the *means* to eſcape it. So that all the *Abſurdities* that dog the *Stoical* dream of *fatal* neceſſity at the heels, are *inſeparable* attendants of this Opinion. For I may not onely ſay, If I ſhall *die* of the *Infection*, I ſhall; if I ſhall *not* die, I ſhall *not*; and therefore I need not uſe *means* to avoid it: But alſo, if I muſt uſe *means*, I muſt; if I muſt not, I muſt not: Seeing Gods decree *neceſſitateth* as much to *uſe* or *omit* the *means*, as to obtain or loſe the *end*. For if their opinion be true, all things whatſoever, *end* or *means* of little or great moment, come to paſſe *neceſſarily* and *unavoidably*, by reaſon of Gods eternal *Decree*.

Here they have two *Evaſions*.

The firſt is this, Albeit (ſay they) God hath moſt certainly *determined* what ſhall, or what ſhall not be done concerning us, yet his *Decree* is hid from us, and we muſt uſe *lawful* and *ordinary* means, for the obtaining of ſuch and ſuch good *Ends*, keeping on the *ordinary* courſe which he hath *revealed* to us. *Evaſio 1.*

See the vanity of this ſhift; our *Oppoſites* teach, that whatſoever God hath *decreed* ſhall be *done*, and whatſoever is *omitted* ſhall be *undone*. If therefore God hath determined that we ſhould not uſe ſuch and ſuch *means*, it is *impoſſible* for us to uſe them; if he hath *decreed* that we ſhould, it is *impoſſible* that we ſhould *omit* them. And therefore it is more than *ridiculous* to ſay, that although God in his *ſecret* will hath determined, that *Confutatio.*

we ſhould not do ſuch a thing, yet we are to do it, ſeeing his *decree*, though it be *ſecret*, yet it will have its *effect*, and it is abſolutely *impoſſible* we ſhou'd do that, which God hath *determined* we ſhall not do.

Evaſion 2. Howſoever (ſay our Oppoſites) our opinion is far from *Stoiciſm*, for the *Stoicks* thought, that all things came *inevitably* to paſs, by reaſon of an indiſſoluble *Chain* and Connexion of *natural* cauſes: but we teach, that all *events* are *irreſiſtably* neceſſary, by reaſon of Gods everlaſting *decrees*, and His *Omnipotency* daily executing them.

Confutation. This reaſon is ſo poor a one, and yet ſo much made on by ſome worthy men, that I am more troubled to wonder at it, than to confute it; yet that I may ſatisfie it diſtinctly, I will divide the opinion of the *Stoicks* into two particular *Tenets*.

1. They hold, that all things come to paſs *inevitably*.

2. They thought the reaſon of this *inevitableneſſe* of events to be an unchangeable *connexion* of *natural* cauſes.

Our Oppoſites ſtifly maintain the former of theſe *Tenets*. Now let the Reader obſerve, that the moſt *prodigious* abſurdities accompanying this *Stoical* error, follow the firſt part of their opinion, though ſequeſtred from the ſecond. For if all things come to paſs *unavoidably*, what need I care what I do? yea, if I ſhall care, I ſhall care whether I will or no; and a thouſand the like horrid conceits follow the opinion of the *neceſſity* of events, whatſoever we make to be the *cauſe* of this neceſſity.

It is a great point of *Turkiſh* Divinity at this day, that all things are done *unavoidably*, and they with our Oppoſites make Gods *will* to be the cauſe of this unavoidableneſs; and therefore they judge of *Gods pleaſure* or *diſpleaſure* by the *event*. Yet there is no *Chriſtian* but abhorreth this *Turciſm*, and gives it no better entertainment than *Anathema Maranatha*.

Its too apparent therefore, that albeit our Adverſaries are true *Chriſtians*, yet in this point their opinion is guilty by reaſon of its conſequence, both of *Stoiciſm* and *Turciſm*.

Again, if we conſider the ſecond part of the *Stoicks* opinion, we ſhall perceive, that the opinion which we confute cannot be minced, but that it will be compleat *Stoiciſm*. The *Stoicks* thought the *connexion* of cauſes to be the cauſe of the *neceſſity* of *events*, its true; but what did they think to be the *connexion* of cauſes?

cauſes? doubtleſs the eternal Laws of *Nature*, which they ſuppoſed to be a *Deity*. It is very probable they thought the *Fates* to be but *Natures* Laws, but whatſoever they meant by the *Fates*, its evident they made their *decrees* to be the cauſe of the *connexion* of cauſes. How often read we both in *Philoſophers* and *Poets* of *Fatorum Decreta*, *Parcarum Leges*, *&c.* Yea, the word *Fatum* it ſelf is as much as a *Decree*; as *Edictum* from *Edicere*, ſo *Fatum* from *Fari*. *Quid aliud eſt Fatum quam id quod Deus de unoquoque fatur*? ſaith *Minutius*. Well then, to apply. Do not our Adverſaries in this point ſuppoſe an *inviolable* linking of all things together, one *neceſſarily* following in the neck of another? Do they not make the *cauſe* of this linking to be Gods irreſiſtable decree? Do they not defend compleat *Stoiciſm*? What part of *Stoiciſm* do they diſclaim? Do they not maintain *inevitable* neceſſity, Do they not teach an *indiſſoluble* connexion of all things? Do they not believe divine *decrees* to be the *cauſe* of this connexion? Certainly they muſt needs confeſs themſelves *Stoicks* in this point, unleſs we will give them leave to grant the *premiſſes*, and deny the *concluſion*. I know the *Stoicks* had miſ-conceits concerning the *Deities*, (as accounting thoſe to be *Deities* which are not) whoſe *decrees* they made the *cauſes* of all things; but they were the common errors of *Paganiſm*, and are beſide the point in hand: And truly theſe ſet aſide, I ſee not wherein our Adverſaries differ from the *Stoicks*. I have proſecuted this Argument more copiouſly, becauſe it includeth many others, I mean, all thoſe which Scripture or Reaſon furniſh us with, againſt the error of the *Stoicks*, and they are many; for I think verily, there are few opinions which have a greater retinue of ridiculous and erroneous conſequences, than this of the unavoidable *neceſſity* of *events*: Some of them may make one *laugh*, and ſome of them may make one *tremble*. I omit the former, becauſe they are obvious to every mans conceit, and I would not willingly make ſport of ſo ſerious a matter. Of the laſt ſort I will ſpecifie one in a ſecond Argument.

That opinion, which being admitted maketh God the *Author* of *ſin*, is groſs and erroneous, that I may ſay no worſe, but ſo (I ſpeak it with *horror*) doth the Opinion of our Oppoſites. I know they are renowned *Chriſtians*, and as they abhor *Stoical* errors, ſo they hold this damnable doctrine, (which is worſe *Arg.* 2.

See this Argument confirmed in the Answer to the 4th Objection.

than ever any *Heretick* held) which transformeth *God* into a *Devil*, to be most *accursed*: yet so the case standeth, that as the error of *fatal necessity*, so this of the *cause of sin*, fatally followeth their opinion; which I prove thus.

They teach, That nothing is done in the world, nor can be done, but what God hath *decreed* to be done. Now it's too certain, that three quarters of the things which are done in the world are *sins*, therefore according to this opinion, God is the *principal* cause of sins, *Devils* and *Men* are but His *Instruments*.

Evasio. The usual Answer is, That God is the cause of all the *actions* that are *sinful*, but not of the *sinfulness* of the actions; of all our *works*, but not of our *obliquities* and imperfections: As one that rides upon a halting Jade is the cause of his *motion*, and yet not of his *halting*.

Confutatio. Its a hard case when they have but one *frivolous* distinction to keep God from *sinning*: Might I here (without wandring) discourse of the nature of sin, I could prove *sin* it self to be an *action*, and confute this groundless distinction that way; but I will keep my self as much to the purpose as I can, and so answer it thus, or rather confute it.

Concomitants. That which is a *principal* cause of any action, is a cause of those *events* which accompany that action *necessarily*. This Rule is most certainly true. Therefore if God by His decrees do force us to those actions which cannot be done without sin, God Himself (I am afraid to rehearse it) must needs be guilty of sin. For example. If God decreed that *Adam* should *unavoidably* eat the *forbidden* fruit, seeing the *eating* of the fruit which he had *forbidden* must needs be with a gross *obliquity*; I do not see how this distinction will justifie God: for *Adam* sinned because he *ate* the fruit that was forbidden; but they say, God *decreed* that he should eat the fruit which was forbidden, *necessarily* and *unavoidably*. The conclusion is too *blasphemous* to be often repeated.

The Reader may see how well that common distinction holdeth water; yea, if this *nicety* were sound, man himself might prove, that he committed no *murder* though he *stabbed* the dead party to the heart; for at his arraignment he might tell the *Judge*, that he did indeed thrust his *dagger* into his heart, but it was not that which took away his life, but the *extinction* of his

natural

natural heat and *vital* ſpirits. Who ſeeth not the wild *frenzie* of him who ſhould make this *Apology*, yet this is all our Adverſaries ſay for God. They ſay, His *decree* was the *cauſe* that *Adam* took the *fruit*, and put it into his mouth, and ate that which he had commanded he ſhould not eat. Yet they ſay, He was not the cauſe of the tranſgreſſion of the commandment.

The example of the *halting* Jade is a meer *impertinency*; for ſuppoſe it were (as it is not) appliable to us, who halt *naturally*; yet *Adam*, before this action, was *ſound*; and therefore God *neceſſitating* him to ſuch an inconveniency, dealt with him as if one ſhould drive a *luſty Nag* into rough paſſages, where he muſt needs break his leggs. Neither is it (as I ſaid) appliable unto us the *lame* poſterity of *Adam*, for he who rideth an horſe that was *lame* before, although he be not a cauſe of the *impotency* which he findeth in the horſe already, yet in urging him to motion, he is now a *cauſe* of the *actual* imperfection in the motion, and ſo perhaps a cauſe of encreaſing the impotency for the future, though he were not the cauſe of his lameneſs, yet he is of his limping at that time. Let the horſe ſtand ſtill, and ſee whether he will halt or no. Marry if the horſe go of himſelf, then the *Rider* is no cauſe of his halting, and ſo we may ſay, that all our *haltings* are from our ſelves without any *inſtigation* from God.

I know our Oppoſites have another ſhift, teaching, that God uſeth to *puniſh* one ſin by making us to *commit* another; ſo that although we *ſin*, He doth but *puniſh*.

Albeit I do not believe this to be true, as 'tis commonly expounded, yet I abſtain at this time from a farther examination of it, becauſe it weakens not my Argument about *Adam*; for his ſin was the firſt that ever he committed, and the *original* of all that ever followed; and therefore if Gods *decree* were the *cauſe* that he *ate* the *forbidden* fruit, as our Adverſaries teach, its apparent whom they make the *Author of all ſin*. Theſe two Arguments well ſcanned, are ſufficient to make any (not fore-ſtalled with pre-conceits) to be afraid of that opinion which believeth all things to come to paſs *neceſſarily*, by reaſon of Gods *irreſiſtable* decree, and therefore they ſhall ſuffice for the confutation of it.

Moreover, ſeeing it is clogged with ſuch *monſtrous* conſequences,

quences, me-thinks our opinion ſhould be far more *amiable*, which giveth no countenance to ſuch hideous mis-ſhapen errors, as it will appear by the proceſs of this diſputation.

Now I proceed to the confirmation of our opinion, concerning the *contingency* of ſome *events* in reſpect of God, by two Arguments more.

Arg. 1. The firſt is this, That God hath decreed that all his creatures *ordinarily*, and for the moſt part, ſhould work according to their ſeveral *kinds* and *endowments*, by which he in the Creation diſtinguiſhed them: For illuſtration they may be ranked into *three* ſeveral forms.

1. In the loweſt ſtand the meer *natural* Agents, *inanimate* and *ſenſleſs* creatures; to theſe God hath given certain *inſtincts* and *inclinations*, by which they are *determinately* ſwayed to theſe or theſe certain *effects* and *operations*, unleſs they are *outwardly* hindered: for *heavy* bodies cannot chuſe but *deſcend*, *fire* cannot chuſe but *burn*, &c.

2. In the ſecond ſtand the *Senſitive* creatures, four-footed *beaſts*, *fouls*, and *fiſhes*; to theſe God hath given *ſenſe* and *knowledge* to diſcern what is good for their *nature*, and what is bad; and amongſt diverſe goods to prefer that which is beſt. He hath given them alſo a *free appetite* or a kind of *ſenſitive will*, by which they may either *freely* proſecute, or avoid ſuch objects as they like or miſlike; not *determinately* tyed to this or that certain *operation*, as the other were. A *ſtone* cannot chooſe but deſcend, but a *beaſt* may as well go up hill as down, &c.

3. In the upper Forme are *Men*, reaſonable Creatures, whom God hath made more *voluntary* than the other, by giving them greater *freedom* of choice, and preſenting unto their more elevated knowledge a great *variety* of objects. Now then, without doubt, God diſtinguiſhed thus his creatures in *abilities* and *faculties*, that they might *operate* in their ſeveral *kinds*, that the *natural* agents might work *naturally*, the *voluntary voluntarily*, as that eloquent French-man *Du Vair* hath well explained this point. The truth of all this no man will deny *explicitely*: Well then, let them hearken to the conſequences of this truth, ſo common both in *Logick* and *Metaphyſicks*, among thoſe who handle of *natural* and *voluntary* cauſes. If God hath *decreed* that many things ſhould be done *voluntarily* by his creatures, then

then alſo hath he decreed that many things ſhould be done *contingently*, in reſpect of him; but the firſt is granted truth, therefore the ſecond ſhould be. The connexion I prove thus. All things are done *contingently* in reſpect of God, which for ought he hath decreed might with as much *poſſibility* not be as be: But all things which are done by the creatures *voluntarily*, may as well not be done, as done; therefore if he hath decreed that many things ſhould be done *voluntarily*, He hath alſo decreed that they ſhould be done *contingently*. The *Minor* is evident, becauſe if the creatures may not as well *omit* them as *do* them, they do them not *voluntarily* but *neceſſarily*.

This Argument both confirms and explains our Opinion, ſhewing how and why many things come to paſs *contingently* in reſpect of God; yea, it maketh it queſtionleſs, that God hath decreed that many things ſhould be done *contingently*, or after ſuch a *reſiſtable* manner, that they might without *fruſtrating* His decree have been *left* undone: yea, we ſee now, that *contingency* it ſelf is *neceſſary* in reſpect of Gods will, who will have many things done *voluntarily*. Otherwiſe to what purpoſe did God give his creatures *will*, if he will not ſuffer them to uſe them?

See again the inconveniencies of the former opinion, which confoundeth all ſorts of creatures, and makes a *man* to operate with no more *freedom* than a *ſtock* or *ſtone*. For according to our Oppoſites, I eat, or drink, or walk with as much *neceſſity*, as *Lead* ſinketh down. God hath decreed that that ſhould ſink, and therefore it muſt; and ſo God hath *decreed* that I muſt walk a *mile*, and therefore I muſt.

Here they have a ſtarting hole, but it is ſo poor a one, that it doth not relieve but diſgrace them. They ſay, That Gods *decree* doth not *compel* any mans *will* to any thing, that he ſhould do ſuch a thing whether he will or no; but he ſo diſpoſeth and worketh it, that it ſhall deſire that which God would have done. And therefore, they ſay, Man hath uſe of his *will*, becauſe whatſoever he doth, though *neceſſitated* to it by God, yet he doth it *willingly*. *Evaſion.*

This *ſlim-ſlam* would move any mans patience, but I will be ſerious. The prerogative of a *voluntary* Agent conſiſteth not in doing that which it deſireth to do, or rather in deſiring to do that which it doth, (for according to them, man deſireth *Confutation.*

the

the thing because it is to be done, yet it is not to be done because he desireth) in *freedom* from *coaction* and *violence*; but in a liberty of *choice* to do or not to do this or that, and so in *freedom* from the *necessity* of *immutability*. So that still for all this *shift*, they make *man* no more *voluntary* than a *stone*. A *stone* hath a *natural* propension or kind of *appetite* to fall downward, yet because this appetite is restrained *necessarily* to this *term*, so that the *stone* must *needs* fall down, it cannot be said to descend *voluntarily*, in any propriety of speech. Is not this just a mans case according to them? A man drinks, they grant he doth it *voluntarily*; yet they say, his *will* is so *restrained* by Gods *decree* to *this* action, that it was not *possible* for him to *omit* it. What difference is there now betwixt the *will* of a *man* and the *will* of a *stone*, onely that God employeth a man in more actions, which altereth not the case? Surely if this be true, it was no wonder *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha* got stones turned into men so fast.

This Argument doth so intangle our opposites, that although in the Question about *particular* providence they are peremptory for the *necessity* of all *events* in respect of *God*; yet when they come to the question about *Free-will*, and more particularly in *free-will* about *natural* matters, as walking, sleeping, riding, &c. they speak so off and on, that one may plainly perceive how they have a *wolf* by the ears: Sometimes they do yield *Free-will* in such things, not considering how they *contradict* what they said before about *particular* Providence; sometimes they yield it, they say, not so much because they yield it to be true, as because they will not contend about such *petty* matters; a very sleeveless put off! sometimes they stiffly deny it, but they are unwilling or unable to produce any Arguments worth a rush.

Arg. 2. That opinion which makes Gods *knowledge* absolutely *infinite*, and most glorifieth His *omniscience*, must needs be better *Divinity*, than that which supposeth by its consequence Gods knowledge to be but *finite*. Now our opinion doth the first, our opposites the second; therefore. The *Minor* Proposition I justifie thus. An absolute *infinity* in knowledge must be either in respect of the *number* of objects, or in respect of the *manner* of comprehending them. Now according to their opinion, in these respects Gods knowledge is but *finite*. *Ergo*.

For

For the first respect, to speak exactly, it cannot make knowledge compleatly *infinite*; for seeing there cannot be an exact *infinite* number of *Objects*, seeing that all things that ever were, or ever shall be, cannot be truly *infinite* in number; it is impossible that any knowledge whatsoever should be properly termed *infinite* in this respect. Yea, seeing the vastest number, and most incomprehensible to our mortal *Arithmetick*, may in it self be doubled and trebled, it is an infallible truth, that any knowledge in this regard may be trebled also, and yet remain *finite*, if we speak not *vulgarly* or unlargely, but *Metaphysical* exquisitions. Well, come to the second Respect, here also our Opposites do much *debate* Gods knowledge, making it but *finite*, and that not of the largest sort; for while they teach, that God hath *decreed* how all things shall *infallibly* come to pass, they require indeed of God an *infinite* power, whereby to *execute* his decrees, but seeing all things shall be effected as He hath decreed they should, a *finite* knowledge may well serve the turn. What wonder is it if God *fore-know* what will be done, if he can but *remember* His own *decrees*? It requireth indeed a *large memory*, but not an *infinite knowledge*.

Suppose a man had but that power to bring to pass what he determined, it would be no strange matter if he could *foretell* future *events*: He would make a hard shift with his *Hypomnemata*, Registers, and Records, and the Art of *Memory*, but he would remember what he had *contrived* should come to pass, in such and such a Country.

Wherefore in the second Respect, *viz.* in the *manner* of comprehending of things, they make the Divine *Præscience* to be but *finite*, whilst they teach, that God knoweth how all things shall come to pass; because the same *knowledge* is the cause, by vertue of *decrees*, of whatsoever shall be effected in the world.

Now that our opinion attributeth unto God a knowledge exactly *infinite*, and makes His *Præscience* more wnoderful, it will plainly appear. God, say we, *ab æterno*, hath ordered that such *Agents* as he created *voluntary*, should have a double *liberty* in their operations, *viz.* a *liberty of contradiction*, to do, or not do; as a *Painter* may choose whether he will work or no: and a *liberty of contrariety*, to do a thing after this or that manner; as a

Painter may use what *colours*, in what *quantity*, after what *fashion*, he pleaseth.

Now then, God leaving to His creatures *free liberty*, to work or not to work, after this or that manner, so that so any *necessity* imposed upon their actions by Him; whatsoever they *omit*, was as possible to be done, as what they did: And yet from all eternity *fore-knowing* whatsoever his creatures would do, or not do, his *fore-knowledge* must needs be *infinite*, and most admirable. *Infinite*, I say, not in respect of the *number* of objects, for so, as I said before, no knowledge can be *infinite*: but in respect of the *omnipotent* and boundless *manner* of actual comprehending those things with an *infallible* fore-sight, which in respect of God were *contingent*, their not being being as possible as their being. And indeed this *fore-sight* of future *contingents*, is the true *character* and Royal *prerogative* of Divine knowledge: and *Ergo* in the 41 of *Esay*, God upbraideth the *Pagan* Deities with this priviledge peculiar to Himself, though juglingly pretended by them in their lying *Oracles*, *vers.* 21. The Lord biddeth them produce *Gnatzumotheken*, the strongest Arguments by which they could prove themselves Gods; and in the next verse he particularizeth, and thrice bids them *tell, if they can, what shall happen in the times to come.* Its worth the observing, how that there was never any sort of *Diviners* Artificial (I speak not of *Devils*, *Witches*, *Gypsies*, and such palpable *Impostors*) that undertook to fore-tell future *contingents*: for if you prove those things which *Astrologers* and *Physiognomers* undertake to fore-tell, to be meer *contingent* in respect of the *Horoscope* or *Complexion*, and no way to depend on them as *natural* causes; you have proved their Arts to be but *Impostures.* How much then do our Opposites dishonor God in this case, making the great *miracle* of his *foresight* of *future contingents* to be as much as nothing? seeing they say, that albeit they are *contingent* in respect of us, yet they are *necessary* in respect of Him. When any man hath answered any of these four Arguments, then will I change my opinion. In the mean time I proceed to the vindicating of it from such exceptions and objections, as our enemies in this case make against it. The dissipating of those mists wherewith they endeavour to obscure this opinion, will not onely clear the truth

truth of it, for belief; but also the sense of it, for understanding.

First, they say, That while we avoid their *Stoicism*, as we term it, we fall into flat *Epicurism*; for while we make so many things in the world to fall out according to the inconstant bent of *voluntary* Agents, we *Deifie Chance*, and make *Fortune* a *goddess*; we do in effect deny Gods *providence*, which they say makes all things come to pass according to a most wise and constant method. *Obj.* 1.

I will be as forward as any man to *Anathematize* him, whosoever he be, who holdeth any thing to fall out *fortuito* in respect of God: I will make it most evident, that our opinion makes no *Chance* in respect of God, and most sweetly illustrates Gods *Providence*. *Answ.*

First, There is a vast difference between *Contingency* and *Casuality*. *Contingency* is an equal *possibility* of being or not being: *Casuality* is the coming to pass of an event *ex improviso*, beside the fore-thought, as I may say of the thing. Now it is our assertion, that many things fall out *contingently* in respect of God, because he imposed no *necessity* upon their being, but left them to the pleasure of the inferior causes, that they might as well not have been, as been. But we say withall, that nothing falleth out *accidentally* or *casually* in respect of God, because nothing cometh to pass without his most certain and unerring *foresight*; he knowing from all eternity what his creatures would do, though he left it to their pleasure to do what they list. 1.

In *events* there is a great difference between *Contingency* and *Casuality* of events in respect of men; for most things we do, we do *contingently*, we being not bound by any *inevitable necessity* to do them; yet as long as we do them upon certain *persuasive* reasons, for certain *ends*, we do them not by *chance*. The same *events* yet are not after the same manner *contingent* in respect of God, as they are in respect of us; for He out of the Prerogative of His *Deity* fore-knoweth them; but we, by reason of our *mortality*, cannot have *infallible* foresight of them; and what *foresight* we have, is in a very little distance.

And indeed, if this point be *punctually* canvased, we shall perceive, that in that same proportion we have any *knowledge*

of them, they are not *contingent* but *neceſſary*: for every thing, ſo far forth as it is in *exiſtence*, or in near preparation for it, is *neceſſary*.

Contingency is the middle point between *neceſſity* and *impoſſibility* of being; and therefore ſo much as any thing inclineth to *exiſtence* it is *neceſſary*. The want or neglect of the diſtinction between *contingency* and *caſualty*, hath been a great cauſe of the error we confute: for our Oppoſites ſtill taking *fortuito* and *contingenter* for *Synonyma*, becauſe they would have nothing *caſual* in reſpect of God, therefore they would have every thing *neceſſary*; not diſcerning the middle path which we walk in between *Epicuriſm* and *Stoiciſm*.

2. Concerning Gods *Providence* we teach, that although according to that *ordinary* courſe (which we call *nature*) which he hath preſcribed for the operation of his creatures in the *decree* of Creation, many things fall out according to the *free choice* of *voluntary Agents*, no way by Him *neceſſitated*; yet God is ſtill buſie with a *double* providence. The *firſt* is *univerſal*; by this, whatſoever *natural* Agents do *contingently*, He *foreſeeth* moſt clearly, and *ordereth* it moſt wiſely, according to His *glory*, the *preſervation* of the *Univerſe*, and *good of His creatures*. The *ſecond* is *particular*; by this He puts in oft-times a *miraculous* finger into ſuch *contingent* buſineſs as reſpects his *Church*, and oft-times ſo worketh the heart of the *voluntary* Agent, that ſometimes he doth that which (if he had been left alone to himſelf) he would not have done; and ſometimes is ſecretly diverted from the doing of that, which otherwiſe he would moſt *willingly*, and (in all likelihood) could moſt *eaſily* have done.

And here our *Oppoſites* may pleaſe to obſerve, how our opinion is ſo far from denying *particular* Providence, that it onely maintaineth a Providence *properly* termed *Particular*: for that *particular* Providence which our Oppoſites ſo much talk of, if it be well looked into, will appear to be in no better ſenſe *particular*, than the *Roman* Church is *univerſal*.

They ſay, That there is not any *numerical* act performed by any creature, without an *eternal* decree from God; this they call *particular* providence. Alas! this is the *general* which concerneth all the actions performed by all things, or at leaſt one mixt of *general* and *particular*. As for example, Becauſe it raineth to day,

day, God ſo ordering that it ſhould, is it any ſenſe to ſay, This rain was by the *particular* providence of God, unleſſe we eſpied *extraordinary* matter in it? We therefore call that *univerſal* providence, whereby God directeth whatſoever His creatures do, according to their *natural* propenſions, for the preſervation and good of the *Univerſe*. We term that *particular* or *ſpeciall* providence, whereby God interpoſing his *extraordinary* power amongſt the *contingent* affairs of *Common-wealths*, or *private* men, ſometimes by ſenſible *miracles* and *prodigies*, ſometimes by His *ſecret* omnipotency, ſenſible onely in the *Event*, manifeſteth His *Mercy* or *Juſtice*, to His own *Glory*, or good of His *Church*.

This is properly termed *ſpecial* providence, and in this ſenſe it is taken by *La Voſino* the *Italian*, in his *Tract*, *De particulari Providentiâ*; and by thoſe who have wrote of that ſubject. Well then, I will now ſpecifie my faith concerning Gods *Providence*.

Firſt, it is very probable, that petty *trivial* matters, ſuch as are *indifferent*, not onely in reſpect of *themſelves*, but alſo of their *conſequences*, fall out altogether *contingently*, without any *neceſſitating* decree. Theſe matters of leſſer moment are of three ſorts.

1. The toys and trifling vanities of *voluntary* Agents, ſuch as the *Italians* term *Badalucii*, or *Ballocamatti*: What a company of idle geſtures and ſporting tricks uſe we every day, which doubtleſs for ought God hath decreed, we might have as eaſily omitted?

2. The petty conſequences of the *main* actions of *natural* Agents: for example, though the main drift and ſcope of the operations of the *Elements* and *Meteors* be according to the method *eternally* preſcribed them by God; yet ſome *particular* events accompanying their operations, ſome *circumſtances* queſtionleſs were not prefixed by a *particular* decree; as now and then it hapneth to rain when the Sun ſhineth, I cannot believe that there's any *ſpecial* decree concerning this.

Hear I would have the Reader obſerve how theſe *events* are not ſo properly called *contingent*, as thoſe other are; for they

they were ſwayed by no *decree* either *general* or *ſpecial*, from the middle point between *neceſsity* and *impoſsibility* of being. But theſe, though they are *contingent* in reſpect of a *particular* decree, and may as well not be as be, for ought God hath *preciſely* determined concerning them; yet in reſpect of the *general* method prefixed to *natural* Agents, they do neceſſarily come to paſs, becauſe their main office cannot be performed without theſe circumſtances and conſequences.

3. The laſt ſort are mixed of the two former, and include all ſuch *events* as reſult from the *contingent concourſe* of *natural* and *voluntary* Agents; as when the wind bloweth off ones hat, &c. to ſay that God *particularly* decreed ſuch trifles, I think it injurious to the *Majeſty* of His Determinations. But here by trifles I mean ſuch matters (as I ſaid before) which are *indifferent*, not onely in reſpect of themſelves, but alſo of their conſequences.

2*ly*. I believe, that things of greateſt moment are done *neceſſarily*, by the *immediate* power of God, either by *ſwaying* men from their own proper inclinations, or by *ſupernatural* means quite croſſing their enterpriſes. So we read in the *Scripture* and *Church-ſtories*, how God hath ſometimes quite changed the hearts of men for ſome great purpoſe concerning his *Church* and *glory*.

3*ly*. I believe that the middle ſort of events in the world, ſuch as are neither *trivial* nor yet *extraordinary*, the *ordinary* ſerious matters which concern *Religion*; *Common-wealths*, the *temporal* and *ſpiritual* good of private men, the preſervation from confuſion, &c. Of theſe, I ſay, my belief is, that though *ordinarily* men and unreaſonable Agents do things *contingently*, yet God doth ſo manage this *contingency*, daily and hourly interpoſing His power according to His *Mercy* or *Juſtice*, that very few matters of *conſequence* are meerly *contingent*. For example, Becauſe I ſee *Marriage* for the moſt part to be either a great *curſe* or a great *bleſſing**, I am ſo far perſwaded of the truth of the common ſaying, that I think that *Marriages* for the moſt part *are made in heaven**, before they are on earth. Let a man diligently peruſe any ſtory, and he ſhall find many things done

* This may ſo happen upon the *poſt-facto*.

* Sure *Davids* was not, a Sam. 1. 1. 27.

done *ordinarily* according to the *natural* bent of *particular* persons, and so *contingently* in respect of God; and yet let him joyn all things done by all the *Actors* in the story together, let him accurately observe how one thing followeth upon another, he shall find, that still at the last there will be something from the *finger* of God manifesting the glory either of His *Mercy* or *Justice*. If we read the History of the *Reformation*, begun by *Luther* and other Divines of *Germany*, we shall perceive many things done by the *natural* humors of men, by the guidance of *Divine* wisdom made admirable furtherances of the *Reformation*. The like may be said of *Henry* the 8th. his *Marriage* (which set most *Universities* in *Christendom* a Disputing) and the dissolution of *Abbeys*. The like indeed may be observed in any History, especially if it concern *Religion* or a *Christian* Commonwealth; for I conceive that Gods *Providence* is more or less remarkable in a place proportionable to the profession of *Religion*. Let a man but diligently observe the prime passages of his own times, let him mark how the chief *Actors* in them do all things according to their *particular* bents and *private* humors; yet let him note the upshot, he shall perceive, that there was some *secret guide* which directed all to God's glory, though men do what they list according to their own pleasure. The best Demonstration of this most usefull and delightfull truth every man might best make to himself, if he would but seriously and circumspectly consider the whole course of his own life, and mark how (whatsoever he hath done out of the absolute *freedom* of his choice) his actions have been turned and winded now and then *contrary* to his *intent*, now and then *beyond* it, now and then *beside* it; sometimes to his *grief*, sometimes to his *comfort*, always to be examples of Gods *Mercy*, or His *Justice*; he will easily perceive, how excellently the Divine *Providence* worketh upon *Contingencies*.

If men would be busied upon such contemplations, they would not shuffle away so many good hours with those waking dreams of *fantastick* solitary discoursings, which *Charron* and others have wisely taxed.

Here

Here the Reader may see how I suppose some things *necessary*, some things *contingent*, some things *mixt*, by reason of divers circumstances of both kinds; by no means undertaking precisely to *determine* how many things are done *contingently*, or how many *necessarily*, &c.

Now as we have formerly shewed how our opinion doth most exactly Blazon the *Divinity* of Gods *infinite knowledge*, by which He *simply* knoweth all things; so also it doth most clearly set forth the honor of His *active wisdom*, by which he *governeth* all things; for, to order all things in an harmonious concord to good, (whatsoever the confused distracted discord of *choices* in inferior causes produce) is a more glorious and superlative act of wisdom, than *first* to *decree* how all things shall be done according to *certain platforms*, and to see them effected *according* to them: Yea, this conceit (though it be *Stoicism* in it self) yet it openeth a greater overture to *Epicurism* than ours; for *Epicurus* and his fellows believed there were gods, but they imagin'd that they incumbred not themselves with the ordering of *sublunary* matters, but suffered matters here below to go for the most part according to the *natural and eternal customs*. Even so, if according to the *opposite* Tenet, God hath *ab æterno* prefixed an *irresistible* tenor and method agreeable to which all things should for ever *necessarily* come to passe. God might *ab æterno* also, from the same instant He made His Decrees, let all things alone (according to *Epicurus* his conceit)* seeing all things must come orderly to pass, by vertue of His *Decree*, though he slept all the while.

* For our Opposites say, *Quæ Deus decrevit sponte fluunt.*

Object. 2. But our Doctrine (they say) contradicteth the Scriptures; our *Saviour* telleth the Apostles, that *the hairs of their head were numbred*, that not so much as a contemptible *Sparrow falleth without his Father*. Therefore the pettiest matters in the world are *determined* by God Himself.

I remember the Marginal Note indeed in the Protestant *Italian* Bible upon *Matth.* 10. 29. upon these words, [*Yet not one of them falleth to the ground without your Father*] saith thus, [*Che non' intravenga it decreto ela volenta sua, &c.*] *i. e.* But so that His decree and will came between: But this gloss is impertinent. The meaning of the place is this, Not one of them

them falleth without Gods *privity* and *permiſſion*. The ſcope of our Saviour was to *comfort* and *encourage* his Diſciples, whom he was now ſending abroad into the world *as ſheep among wolves*; to this purpoſe he tells them, that *the hairs of their head were numbred, &c.* the number of them was known to God, without whoſe *permiſſion* they could not loſe one of them. That not ſo much as a *Sparrow* falleth without their *Father*, &c *i. e.* without the *knowledge* and *permiſſion* of Him who was their loving Father: And therefore he bids them not to be afraid, ſeeing if ſuch trifles could not be without Gods *permiſſion*, doubtleſs God, who was their more *ſpecial* obſerver, would not ſuffer men to meddle with them, more than ſhould be for His glory and their good. So that it cannot without abſurdity be hence concluded, that God hath made any *ſpeciall decree* concerning *Sparrows*; for, (as St. *Paul* ſaith) *Doth God take care for Oxen?* ſo ſay I, Doth God take care for *Sparrows*? Here it is worth the obſervation, that the Arguments (for the moſt part) which our *Oppoſites* produce for the *neceſſity* of all *events*, and *their* kind of *particular* providence, are ſuch which (as one ſaith) *Aut nihil concludunt, aut nimium*, conclude either not ſo much, or more than they would have them; being much like the garments which were made for the Moon, either too big or too little for their concluſions; for either they are drawn from *particular* examples, and prove nothing at all, (as when *Calvin* proveth that there ariſeth no wind without a *ſpecial* decree from God, becauſe he cauſed the *South-wind* to bring the *Iſraelites Quails*, and ſent the *tempeſt* which cauſed *Jonas* to be caſt into the Sea) or elſe they are deduced out of ſuch reaſons and Scriptures, which (as they handle them) prove God to be the *Author of ſin*, and ſo a great deal more than they are willing they ſhould.

But our opinion may ſeem to patronize the proud error concerning *Free-will*; for if God doth not *Neceſſitate* our Actions, but leave them to our inclinations, ſo that it is in our power to work or not work; we have *freedom* of will to do or not to do, whatſoever we do *contingently*. *Object.* 3.

Theſe words [*which we do contingently*] are well put in; for we ſay many things are done *contingently* in reſpect of God, yet many we ſay are done by Gods *ſpecial* determination. But *Solution.*

'tis most certainly true, that good duties, properly so called, (to which we are tied *pro hac statu*) are never performed without *choice* and *freedom*. Which therefore (amongst other *priviledges* of Christs purchasing) are restored under the spiritual *Jubilee* of the Gospel, and initiated on us by the holy Ghost as one *special* part of our Redemption. *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed.* And, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

In answer then to the Objection, I say, That, for our *natural* actions, as *eating, walking*, &c. I believe that *ordinarily* we perform them *freely* and *contingently* in respect of God. Likewise I doubt not, but as the antient Heathens *Aristides, Socrates, Cato, Fabritius*) so many now a days perform many things *civilly* and *morally* good, being left alone * to their *contingent* educations and complexions. But for matter of *grace* and *salvation*, I confess, to the glory of God, that *in us* (*being dead in sins and trespasses*) *dwelleth no good*; That we cannot so much as *think* (much less do) any good, unless the holy Ghost giveth us the power *both to will and to do* it.

* I do not reject the opinion of *resistingent* grace, if it be well expounded.

Adam before his *fall* * was equally poised between *perseverance* and *defection*, but he *falling* by the *freedom* of his choice, lost those perfections which made him *free*: so that if his posterity do any thing *truly* good, it is from God, not from themselves; whatsoever *bad* they do, it is from themselves not from God.

* The opposite Tenet alloweth not *Adam Free will* in his innocency, as I could easily prove, and is partly affirmed already by the third Argument.

Here it may be noted, that we may do many things *contingently* in respect of God, which yet we do not *freely* but *necessarily* in respect of our selves; as our sins are *contingent* in respect of Him, because he never imposed any *necessity* of sinning upon us, yet they are *necessary* in respect of our selves, seeing we being *left to our selves* cannot but sin. So many things which are *contingent* in respect of our nature, may be in some sort *necessary* in respect of our *persons*; as those things which our *complexions*, or *customs* and *habits* necessitate us to: But this is an impertinency.

Obj. 4. They say moreover, that our opinion contradicteth both *Scripture* and *Philosophy*.

1. For *Scripture*, it is said, *Act.* 14. that *in him we live, move, and have our being*; by which words we are taught, that all our motions, of what kind soever, either *natural* or *moral*, *vital* or *rational*, are not onely guided, but also caused by God Himself.

2. Both

2. Both in *Logick* and *Metaphyſicks* there are divers Rules conſonant to this Scripture, as [*Cauſa cauſæ eſt etiam cauſa cauſati: cauſa ſecunda non agit niſi mota à prima, &c.*] Therefore man doth no kind of thing but God is the *firſt* cauſe of it, and conſequently whatſoever we do, we do *neceſſarily* in reſpect of Him.

This is one of the Arguments which proveth more than our Adverſaries would have them, and by theſe Rules have I formerly in the ſecond Argument proved, that they make God *the Author of ſin*; for if *cauſa cauſæ* be *cauſa cauſati* (as doubtleſs it is) while they make God the cauſe of all thoſe *actions*, which either are *ſins*, or the *cauſes* of *ſins*, queſtionleſs they make God (according to their own Argumentation) the *cauſe of ſins*. But they have a limitation for this Rule, and ſay, that it holdeth *in cauſis eſſentialiter ſubordinatis*, as they ſay, that God is the cauſe of all thoſe things which are *eſſentially and diſtrictly* done by our wills; but ſins proceeding from the *depravation* of our wills, are effects of a cauſe, not *directly* ſubordinate to God. The limitation is ſound, but not applicable to their inſtance; yet, the limitation it ſelf quite ſpoileth them: For 1. While *Adam*'s will was yet ſound, they teach, that God decreed that *Adam* ſhould *eat the forbidden fruit*; now at that time they cannot ſay, but that *Adam* was a cauſe *eſſentially ſubordinate* to God. 2. They teach, that God is a *cauſe* not onely of our *actions*, but alſo of our *volitions*, as I may ſay; then *theſe* being the cauſes of our ſins, are directly *ſubordinate* to him. *Anſw.*

3. Let us conſider not onely the *ſubordination* between *God* and our *wills*, but alſo between our *actions* and their *moralities*, and we ſhall perceive, that according to the *abuſe* of theſe Rules, they make God the cauſe of our ſins. For that Rule, *Cauſa cauſæ eſt cauſa cauſati*, is infallibly true expounded thus, *The cauſe of any effect, is the cauſe of all ſuch events as neceſſarily follow that effect.*

Now then, if (as they ſay) God be a *neceſſary* cauſe of all our *particular* actions, ſeeing our *actions* in reference to ſuch and ſuch *objects* muſt needs be *ſinful*, it is manifeſt what followeth. For example: Though to take money in *general* be no ſin, yet to take *this* or *that* money, being none of our *own*, is a ſin. Now then, if God be a *cauſe* of *this* action in reference to *this* object (as he is if he be the cauſe of this *particular* action) it is impoſſible their

Doctrine should excuse God from sin. *Eating*, in reference to the *forbidden* fruit, was a *sin*; but according to them, God was a *principal* cause of eating the *forbidden fruit*. *Ergo.*

Minor prob. They say he was the *necessitating* cause of this particular action.

Eating was a *natural* action, the *individuation* of this eating by an *unlawful* object was a *moral* obliquity.

But God was the cause of this *individual*. *Ergo.*

The like may be said of all our *sinful actions*. *When I have drunk sufficiently both for the necessity and comfort of nature, to drink a cup more is sin.* But our Opposites teach, that I cannot take up this superfluous cup without Gods *speciall* determination: *Ergo.*

This Doctrine is enough to make ones hair stand an end, making God (whatsoever they say) the *cause* not onely of our *actions*, but also of our *obliquities*: for what are the *obliquities* of our *actions*, but the placing of them upon wrong *objects*? If therefore they make God the *principal* cause of all our *particular* actions, most of which are particularized by bad objects) what do these men make of God? But Recrimination is no answer.

Hitherto I have shewed (though perhaps without method, yet, I hope, not without profit) how our Opposites are wounded with their own weapons. Now I will take their weapons out of their hands, and teach them the right use of them, shewing how God is the *cause of all things*, onely not the cause of *sin*: a cause of all good things, yet so as that many good things are *contingent* also.

We have shewed in the third Argument how God hath ordained, that all sorts of *Inferior* or *second causes* should work according to their proper kinds; that *voluntary* Agents should work *voluntarily*, &c. God then is the *first cause* that all things do work and that they do work in certain kinds: If so, then God is the cause that many things are done *contingently*, one of the chiefest sorts of second causes by this appointment working *voluntarily*, and therefore *contingently*, which connexion we have formerly justified. This being well understood, will instruct us not onely that it may be so, but also that it must be so. That God being the *necessary cause* of all good things, yet all such things are not *necessary effects* of Him. For example, It is impossible that man should do any thing without God, therefore God is a cause *necessary*,

ceſſary to the being of all things effected by him; yet becauſe many things done by the *free choice* of man, might as well have been omitted (God no ways conſtraining him to them) theſe are not *neceſſary effects* of God. The Reaſon of this is, becauſe God hath decreed that man ſhould work *voluntarily*, having liberty to do as well one thing as another, yet ſo that God giveth him the *ſtrength* to do whatſoever he *chooſeth* to do, and *ability* to *chooſe* what he will without limitation of his choice, (for this were (elſe) to take it away, and to make man an *involuntary* Agent.) For example, God hath given thee *ſtrength* of body; he hath given thee alſo *ability to chooſe* in what exerciſe thou wilt employ it; thou chooſeſt to *Ring* or *Dance*; God then the Author of thy ſtrength is the *chief* cauſe of theſe exerciſes, yet ſo, as they are *contingent* in reſpect of Him, becauſe thou mightſt have omitted them hadſt thou pleaſed. By this we may plainly ſee, how God is the *principal cauſe* of all things of which he is *capable* to be a cauſe; and yet many things are *contingent* in reſpect of him. This being cleared, we may with more facility conceive, how and in what ſenſe God is the cauſe of all we do, and yet we onely the cauſe of ſin.

God ſuſtains us when we are about our ſins; even then, *in Him we live, and move, and have our being*, as well as when we are better buſied. God giveth that *ſtrength* by which we commit any ſin, yet becauſe he doth not *neceſſitate* or *incline* unto it, but we of our ſelves *abuſe* it to wickedneſs, God hath ſtill the part of a *Creator*, we onely are *ſinful*. An example will make this clear, Suppoſe a King delivereth to his Subject *Men*, *Weapons*, *Mony*, and *Warlike proviſion*, that he may fight for his Honor againſt his enemies; his Subject proves a *Traitor*, and uſeth all his *Soveraigns* ſtrength againſt himſelf. His Soveraign here is a *cauſe* that he hath the *command*, and doth the *Office* of a Captain, but he is no cauſe of his *Treachery*, the *offence* is onely the *Captains*, and the *wrong* is onely the *Soveraigns*. This is juſt the caſe between God and us; God hath given us many excellent *faculties* both of *body* and *ſoul*, which he *intended* we ſhould uſe to his *Glory*, in obedience to his commandements, and *reſiſt* His and our enemy the Devil; we moſt *traiterouſly* ſiding with *Satan*, have *abuſed* His gifts to His Diſhonor; God did the part of a *Creator*, we of *Rebels*. A man lives *intemperately*, God gave him not ſtrength

to

to this purpose, he *necessitated* not the man to this intemperancy: Man therefore onely sinned, God is dishonoured. The King made his Subject *able* to rebel against him, by delivering his *military* furniture unto him; the verier *miscreant* he that did rebell against him. So God made *Adam* indeed *able* to sin, but he never *intended* that he should sin with that ability. God then is the *cause* of all those things in which we sin, and yet whatsoever he doth is exceeding good; he is not the *cause* that we *intend* any sin, but the *cause* that we are *able* to commit those sins we intend; and yet he *intended* not our abilities for sin, but for his Service. Of all our good actions he is the *first* cause, we are the *second*: of all our sins we are the *proper* cause, he is onely the *Conditio sine qua non*.

But here some man may say, That *choice* or *election* of an *unlawful* object (upon which we misplace our actions) is that which maketh us sinners, now this being an act of our *will*, it must suppose also the *concourse* of God; how then doth our opinion clear the point? The same Answer abundantly sufficeth; God made *Adam* able to be *willing* to sin, but he made him not to *will* sin: God set before him *life and death*, that he did *choose* death it was by the *strength* of will given him of God; but God did not *bind* him to *choose* death, for that were (a *contradiction*) a *necessitated* choice.

Object. ult. Briefly, whatsoever we choose, we do it by the power by which we are *voluntary Agents*, yet if we choose death, God is not to be blamed, (for he made us *voluntary*) and therefore it was as *possible* for us to have *chosen* life. If the nature of a *voluntary* Agent be well observed, this point will be most evident.

The last objection is this, Gods *fore-knowledge* of all *futures* is most *infallible* and *necessary*: *Ergo*, All *futures* in respect of him fall out *necessarily*, otherwise it is possible God may be *deceived*; yea, if many things fall out *contingently*, Gods *fore-knowledge* of them can be but *contingent*, depending after a sort on mans *free-will*.

This Argument is *plausible* at the first view, but if it be touched it falls to shatters. It is one thing to know that a thing will *necessarily be done*, and another to *know necessarily* that a thing will be done. God doth *necessarily and certainly foreknow* all that will be done, but he doth not know that those things which shall be done *voluntarily* will be done *necessarily*: he knoweth that they

they will be done, but he knoweth withall, that they might have fallen out otherwiſe, for ought he had ordered to the contrary. So God *neceſſarily* knew that *Adam* would fall, and yet he knew that he would not fall *neceſſarily*, for it was as poſſible for him not to have fallen. It was the *antient* (and is ſtill the true) opinion, That Gods *Præſcience* is not the cauſe of *Events*; he *fore-knoweth* all things becauſe they will be done, things are not done becauſe he *fore-knoweth* them. The *infallibility* of his knowledge conſiſteth not in the *immutability* of his *decree*, but in the *prerogative* of his *Deity*; it is impoſſible therefore that any man by his *voluntary* manner of working ſhould *delude* Gods *fore-ſight*, not becauſe God doth *neceſſitate* his will to *certain effects*, (for this were indeed to take it away) but becauſe his *fore-knowledge* is *infinite*.

Let our hearts therefore be never ſo full of *Mazes* and *Meanders*, turning and winding, yet Πάντα ἰδὼν Διὸς ὀφθαλμός, (to uſe the *Poets* language) the *all-ſeeing* Eye of God cannot but eſpy them long before, not becauſe he himſelf *contrived* them (for then it were no wonder if he were καϱδιογνώστης) but becauſe to Him (who is every way *infinite*) all things cannot be but *preſent* and τέτϱαχηλισμένα, which is the ſignificant word of the *Author* to the *Hebrews*, ſignifying *open*, by a *metaphor* or ſimilitude drawn from a word that ſignifies, *having the faces laid upwards*, becauſe ſuch as lye ſo have their *face* expoſed to the ſight of all men.

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